

SCHOPENHAUER ON MEN, BOOKS, AND MUSIC.

MANY readers who have neither leisure nor inclination to master Schopenhauer's scheme of metaphysics, nor German enough to read his non-philosophical works with ease, may yet like to know what the great pessimist thought of men considered as social and intellectual beings, on books and authors, lastly on music and art generally; topics on which he mused perpetually, and had much to say. The metaphysician was ever the keen observer to whom nothing human was alien. He could not be said to live in the world, but he knew it as few practical men have done, and not only its outer but its inner life, its æsthetic as well as its material side.

Insight led him further than experience leads the majority, and, theoretic pessimist *par excellence* though he was, as a moral teacher he has nevertheless some valuable lessons to give us, and cheerful lessons, too. What, indeed, will many readers ask with pardonable incredulity, can this cynic of cynics, this uncompromising misanthrope and unparalleled misogynist, teach the rest of mankind? A little patience, good reader, and the question shall be satisfactorily answered. It must first be borne in mind that Schopenhauer does not profess to instruct the great, unthinking, unlettered multitude, the "common herd," for whom he can not conceal his contempt. He says, somewhere, "Nature is intensely aristocratic with regard to the distribution of intellect. The demarkations she has laid down are far greater than those of birth, rank, wealth, or caste in any country, and in Nature's aristocracy, as in any other, we find a thousand plebeians to one noble, many millions to one prince, the far greater proportion consisting of mere *Pöbel, canaille, mob*." For the latter class—from his point of view the preponderating bulk

of mankind—it may be excellent citizens and heads of families, but without pretense either to originality, thought, or learning, and dominated by the commonplace, he entertains a positive aversion. It was less the incapacity of ordinary mortals that irritated him than their love of talking about what they do not understand, and that worst of all conceits, the conceit of knowledge without the reality. Stupidity was Schopenhauer's bugbear; mental obtuseness, in his eyes, the cardinal sin, the curse of Adam, the plague-spot in the intellectual world; and whenever opportunity arose he fell to the attack with Quixotic fury and impatience. "Conversation between a man of genius and a nonentity," he says somewhere, "is like the casual meeting of two travelers going the same way, the first mounted on a spirited steed, the other on foot. Both will soon get heartily tired of each other, and be glad to part company."

Equally good is the following psychological reflection:

The seal of commonness, the stamp of vulgarity written upon the greater number of physiognomies we meet with, is chiefly accounted for in the fact of the entire subjection of the intellect to the will; consequently, the impossibility of grasping things except in their relation to the individual self. It is quite the contrary with the expression of men of genius or richly endowed natures, and herein consists the family likeness of the latter throughout the world. We see written on their faces the emancipation of the intellect from the will, the supremacy of mind over volition; hence the lofty brow, the clear, contemplative glance, the occasional look of supernatural joyousness we find there in perfect keeping with the pensiveness of the other features, notably the mouth. This relation is finely indicated in the saying of Giordano Bruno: "In tristitia, hilaris; in hilaritate, tristis."

Here he brings his sledge-hammer upon the dunderheads without mercy:

Brainless pates are the rule, fairly furnished ones the exception, the brilliantly endowed very rare, genius a *portentum*. How otherwise could we account for the fact that out of upward of eight hundred millions of existing human beings, and after the chronicled experiences of six thousand years, so much should still remain to discover, to think out and to be said?

True enough, it required a Pascal to invent a wheelbarrow, and doubtless we must wait for another before discovering the cure for a smoking chimney and other every-day nuisances. But Schopenhauer does not content himself with scourging stupidity; he goes to the bottom of the matter, and, at the risk of touching metaphysical ground, we extract the following elucidation of an every-day mystery. Who has not gazed with puzzledom on the initial letters, names, and even mottoes cut upon ancient public monuments in all countries, from the pyramids of Egypt to the monoliths of Carnac, from the crumbling walls of the Dionysiac theatre at Athens to the tombs in the Campagna? Nothing is too solemn or too sacred for these incorrigible scratchers or scribblers, who seem, indeed, to have made the journey to the uttermost ends of the world for the sake of carving John Smith or Tom Brown on some conspicuous relic of former ages. As far as we know, Schopenhauer is the first to explain this mischievous and absurd habit of the tourists whose name is Legion:

By far the greater part of humanity [he says] are wholly inaccessible to purely intellectual enjoyments. They are quite incapable of the delight that exists in ideas as such; everything standing in a certain relation to their own individual will—in other words, to themselves and their own affairs—in order to interest them, it is necessary that their wills should be acted upon, no matter in how remote a degree. A *naïve* illustration of this can be seen in every-day trifles; witness the habit of carving names in celebrated places. This is done in order that the individual may in the faintest possible manner influence or act upon the place, since he is by it not influenced or acted upon at all.

To understand Schopenhauer's classification of mankind we should master his metaphysical scheme; but, for our present purpose, the following explanation will suffice: The world of dunderheads—the stupid, the ignorant, and the self-sufficient—are, according to his theory, to be distinguished from the intellectual, the gifted, the high-souled, and the noble-minded, in the *subjectivity* of their intellect—in other words, the subjection of intellect to will; while with the choice spirits, the flower and *élite* of mankind,

the reverse is the case; and this *objectivity*, or emancipation from the will, enables them to live outside the restricted little world of self; and, instead of being interested in things only as they immediately affect their own wills—i. e., interests, feelings, and passions—they are interested in the larger, wider life of thought and humanity. "Every man of genius," he says somewhere, "regards the world with purely objective interest—indeed, as a foreign country"; and in another passage, following out the same line of thought, he gives an apt simile by way of illustrating his theories:

The average individual (*Normal Mensch*) is engrossed in the vortex and turmoil of existence, to which he is bound hand and foot by his will. The objects and circumstances of daily life are ever present to him, but of such taken objectively he has not the faintest conception. He is like the merchants on the Bourse at Amsterdam, who take in every word of what their interlocutor says, but are wholly insensible to the surging noise of the multitude around them.

Cynical although this may sound, no one can write more genially than Schopenhauer when on his favorite theme of genius. If he castigates his arch-enemy—the *Normal Mensch*, nonentity, dunderhead, fool, as the case may be—he glows with poetic ardor and descants with appropriate warmth on the *Geniale*: which word we may take to mean the man of genius as well as the gifted, the intellectually genial, the uncommon as compared with the commonplace in humanity. It was not only that Schopenhauer realized the worth and value of genius and rare mental endowments to the world at large, but he comprehended what those precious gifts are to the individual himself. He understood that inscrutable felicity, that happiness past finding out, neither to be bestowed nor acquired, which is based on intellectual supremacy, a high spirit, a noble, unworldly nature. Characters of the loftiest type had inexhaustible fascinations for him; it was the wine with which he loved to intoxicate himself; the ambrosia on which he fed like an epicure. He never wearies of descanting upon the nature of that true joy which, to use the words of Seneca, is a serious thing. "The joy born of thought and intellectual beauty." Would that space permitted a translation of his entire chapter entitled "Von Dem, was Einer ist," "Parerga," vol. i.; for this, if nothing else, would put Schopenhauer before us in the light of a moral teacher, inculcating the superiority of spiritual, moral, and intellectual truth over material good and worldly well-being. "Happiness depends on what we are—on our individuality. For only that which a man has in himself, which he carries with him into solitude,

which none can give or take away, is intrinsically his"; and elsewhere he says:

As an animal remains perforce shut up in the narrow circle to which nature has condemned it, our endeavors to make our domestic pets happy being limited by their capacities, so is it with human beings. The character or individuality of each is the measure of his possible happiness, meted out to him beforehand, natural capacities having for once and for all set bounds to his intellectual enjoyments: are these capacities narrow, then no endeavors or influences from without, nothing that men or joys can do for him, suffice to lead an individual beyond the measure of the commonplace, and he is thrown back upon mere material enjoyments, domestic life, sad or cheerful as the case may be, mean companionship and vulgar pastime, culture being able to do little in widening the circle. For the highest, the most varied, the most lasting enjoyments are those of the intellect, no matter how greatly in youth we may deceive ourselves as to the fact. Hence it becomes clear how much our happiness depends on what we are, while for the most part fate or chance bring into computation only what we have, or what we appear to be.

Not in this passage only, but in a dozen others, Schopenhauer has contrasted the existence of the worldling, the devotee of business or pleasure, the materialist, or the empty-pated, living, intellectually speaking, from hand to mouth, with that of the thinker, the student, the man of wide culture and many-sided knowledge and aspiration. "There is no felicity on earth like that which a beautiful and fruitful mind finds at its happiest moments in itself," he writes; and this consideration leads him to some rather uncharitable remarks upon society, so called, and its unsatisfactoriness in so far as the *Genialer*, intellectual or genial-minded, are concerned:

The more a man has in himself, the less he needs of others, and the less they can teach him. This supremacy of intelligence leads to unsociableness. Ay; could the quality of society be compensated by quantity, it might be worth while to live in the world! Unfortunately, we find, on the contrary, a hundred fools in the crowd to one man of understanding! The brainless, on the other hand, will seek companionship and pastime at any price. For in solitude, when all of us are thrown upon our own resources, what he has in himself will be made manifest. Then sighs the empty-pated, in his purple and fine linen, under the burden of his wretched Ego, while the man rich in mental endowments fills and animates the dreariest solitude with his own thoughts. Accordingly we find that every one is sociable and craves society in proportion as he is intellectually poor and ordinary. For we have hardly a choice in the social world between solitude and commonplace-ness.

So much for Schopenhauer's classification of

mankind, since in substance it amounts to this: Wise men and fools, thinkers and empty-pates, illuminating spirits and bores—he is never tired of drawing the distinction between them, and ringing the changes on their respective merits and demerits. Bitter, cynical, sarcastic as he is, his strictures are for the most part true, and if boredom or stupidity, like other human infirmities, admit of alleviation, Schopenhauer shows the way. All that he has to say on education, the cultivation of good habits in youth, the proper subjection of the passions to reason, is admirable. He, as usual, goes to the root of the matter, and begins with trying to hammer into the understandings of his countrypeople those elementary notions of hygiene and physical training we find so wanting among them:

As we ought above all things to cultivate the habit of cheerfulness, and as nothing less affects it than wealth, and nothing more so than bodily health, we should strive after the highest possible degree of health, by means of temperance and moderation, physical as well as mental; two hours' brisk movement in the open air daily [Heavens! what do German professors say to *that*? and the next prescription also must alarm them still more], and the free use of cold water, also dietary rules.

All who are familiar with German domestic life know how, even in the best educated classes, such things are still neglected, to the great detriment of health, sedentary habits especially being carried to a pitch which appears to ourselves incredible. When Schopenhauer reprimands his countrymen severely upon their want of common sense in these matters, we feel the strictures to be deserved, and must remember that he wrote thirty years ago; his voice being among the first, if not the very first, raised in Germany on behalf of soap-and-water, and exercise. In a sentence he happily enunciates the primary principles of education, not considered as merely a system of instruction, but in the comprehensive sense of the word:

Above all things, children should learn to know life in its various relations, from the original, not a copy. Instead of making haste to put books in their hands, we should teach them by degrees the nature of things and the relation in which human beings stand to each other.

From education we pass to the subject of culture, so called; in other words, that self-education which men and women pursue for themselves throughout the various stages of their existence. We find such a process going on in all classes. Some people have one way of instructing themselves, some another; but we may fairly take it for granted that books are or profess to be the principal instructors of adult humanity.

using the enormous numbers of worthless books published, and the vast amount of time squandered upon their perusal, we can not honestly deny the following assertions :

It is the case with literature as with life : wherever we turn, we come upon the incorrigible mob of human-kind, whose name is Legion, swarming everywhere, damaging everything, as flies in summer. Hence the multiplicity of bad books, those exuberant weeds of literature which choke the true corn. Such books rob the public of time, money, and attention, which ought properly to belong to good literature and noble aims, and they are written with the view merely to make money or occupation. They are therefore not merely useless, but injurious. Nine tenths of our current literature has no other end but to inveigle a thaler or two out of the public pocket, for which purpose author, publisher, and printer are leagued together. A more pernicious, subtler, and bolder piece of trickery is that by which penny-a-liners (*Brod-schreiber*) and scribblers succeed in destroying good taste and real culture. . . . Hence the paramount importance of acquiring the art *not* to read ; in other words, of not reading such books as occupy the public mind, or even those which make a noise in the world, and reach several editions in their first and last years of existence. We should recollect that he who writes for fools finds an enormous audience, and we should devote the ever-scant leisure of our circumscribed existence to the master spirits of all ages and nations, those who tower over humanity, and whom the voice of Fame proclaims : only such writers cultivate and instruct us. Of bad books we can never read too little ; of the good, never too much. The bad are intellectual poison, and undermine the understanding. Because people insist on reading not the best books written for all time, but the newest contemporary literature, writers of the day remain in the narrow circle of the same perpetually revolving ideas, and the age continues to wallow in its own mire.

This is severe, but who, in these days of book-making and inordinate reading of the emptiest kind, will affirm that the philosopher's strictures are unmerited ? Schopenhauer knew what literature is, and had nurtured his intellect on the choicest, not only of his own country but of others ; and he could not brook the craving for bad books and the indifference to works of genius that he saw around him. It was not, however, the smatterer, but the book-worm and the pedant he had in his mind when penning the sentence :

Mere acquired knowledge belongs to us only like a wooden leg and a wax nose. Knowledge attained by means of thinking resembles our natural limbs, and is the only kind that really belongs to us. Hence the difference between the thinker and the pedant. The intellectual possession of the independent thinker is like a beautiful picture, which stands before us, a living thing, with fitting light and shadow, sustained tones, perfect harmony of color. That of the merely

learned man may be compared to a palette covered with bright colors, perhaps even arranged with some system, but wanting in harmony, coherence, and meaning.

Feelingly and beautifully he writes elsewhere about books :

We find in the greater number of works, leaving out the very bad, that their authors have thought, not seen—written from reflection, not intuition. And this is why books are so uniformly mediocre and wearisome. For, what an author has thought, the reader can think for himself ; but, when his thought is based on intuition, it is as if he takes us into a land we have not ourselves visited. All is fresh and new. . . . We discover the quality of a writer's thinking powers after reading a few pages. Before learning what he thinks, we see how he thinks—namely, the texture of his thoughts ; and this remains the same, no matter the subject in hand. The style is the stamp of individual intellect, as language is the stamp of race. We throw away a book when we find ourselves in a darker mental region than the one we have just quitted. Only those writers profit us whose understanding is quicker, more lucid than our own, by whose brain we indeed think for a time, who quicken our thoughts, and lead us whither alone we could not find our way.

In the same strain is the following extract from his great work, " *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* " :

It is dangerous to read of a subject before first thinking about it. Thereby arises the want of originality in so many reading people ; for they only dwell on a topic so long as the book treating of it remains in their hands—in other words, they think by means of other people's brains instead of their own. The book laid aside, they take up any other matters with just the same lively interest, such as personal affairs, cards, gossip, the play, etc. To those who read for the attainment of knowledge, books and study are mere steps of a ladder leading to the summit of knowledge—as soon as they have lifted their feet from one step, they quit it, mounting higher. The masses, on the contrary, who read or study in order to occupy their time and thoughts, do not use the ladder to get up by, but burden themselves with it, rejoicing over the weight of the load. They carry what should carry them.

Upon books in the abstract, Schopenhauer has much that is suggestive to tell us, and here also we must perforce content ourselves with a few golden grains from the garnered stores before us.

He was a stupendous reader ; and he read not only the masterpieces of his own age and country, but of most others. Oriental literature, the classics of Greece and Rome, the great English, Spanish, Italian, and French authors, were equally familiar to him. We can not recall a

literary masterpiece placed before you had not studied; and, the more he read, the more eclectic he became. As a critic, he is as original as he is suggestive, whether one can always agree or not. Take the following:

To my thinking, there is not a single noble character to be found throughout Homer, though many worthy and estimable. In Shakespeare is to be found one pair of noble characters—yet not so in a supreme degree—Cordelia and Coriolanus, hardly any more; the rest are made of the same stuff as Homer's folk. Put all Goethe's works together, and you can not find a single instance of the magnanimity portrayed in Schiller's "Marquis Posa."

And these remarks on history:

He who has read Herodotus will have read quite enough history for all practical purposes. Everything is here of which the world's after-history is composed—the striving, doing, suffering, and fate of humanity, as brought about by the attributes and physical conditions Herodotus describes.

But he would not discourage the student of history:

What understanding is to the individual, history is to the human race. Every gap in history is like a gap in the memory of a human being. In this sense, it is to be regarded as the understanding and conscious reason of mankind, and represents the direct self-consciousness of the whole human race. Only thus can humanity be taken as a whole, and herein consists the true work of this study and its general overpowering interest. It is a personal matter of all mankind.

His running commentaries on some of the literary *chefs-d'œuvre* of various epochs are acute and ardently sympathetic pieces of criticism. He was, as is well known, a great, if somewhat theoretical, admirer of England and anything English, and had a positive passion for some of our writers—Byron, for one. The reader may find abundant criticism, with frequent citations from many authors, in "Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung," and these may be enjoyed without plunging ourselves into the gulf of metaphysics.

We must add that he writes always in a lucid manner. Schopenhauer was indeed a German who knew what style meant, and this might have formed his epitaph had he permitted any: "I will have nothing written on my tomb," he said, "except the name of Arthur Schopenhauer. The world will soon find out who *he* was"—a prediction which indeed came true. Doubtless the limpid, clear-flowing style of his prose has no little contributed to the popularization of his works. However weighed down with metaphysics, his writings are generally so transparent in expression, and so clear in conception, as to

form delightful reading—the maliciousness adding piquancy here and there.

But it is on the subject of nature and art generally, above all, his darling theme of music, that we find him at his best and happiest.

The sneer has now vanished from his lips, and instead of gall and wormwood we have honeyed utterances only. While none could more pungently satirize the things he hated, none could more poetically extol the things he loved—witness his chapters on music, art, and nature. Of course, only scientific musicians, and perhaps also musicians wedded to the music of the future, can fully appreciate his theories; but all who care for music at all, and understand what it means in the faintest degree, will read with delight such passages as these:

How significant and full of meaning is the language of music! Take the *Da Capo*, for instance, which would be intolerable in literary and other compositions, yet here is judicious and welcome, since in order to grasp the melody we must hear it twice.

The unspeakable fervor or inwardness (*innige*) of all music, by virtue of which it brings before us so near and yet so remote a paradise, arises from the quickening of our innermost nature that it produces, always without its reality or tumult.

Music, indeed, is bound up with Schopenhauer's metaphysical theories; and, rather than miss one of the most exquisite passages on this subject in his *opus magnum*, we for once gaze lightly on metaphysical ground. The following requires to be carefully thought over:

The nature of man is so constituted that his will is perpetually striving and perpetually being satisfied—striving anew, and so on, *ad infinitum*, his only happiness consisting in the transition from wish to fulfillment and from fulfillment to wish; all else is mere *ennui*.

Corresponding to this is the nature of melody, which is a constant swerving and wandering from the key-note, not only by means of perfect harmonies, such as the third and dominant, but in a thousand ways and by every possible combination, always perforce returning to the key-note at last. Herein, melody expresses the multifiform striving of the will, its fulfillment by various harmonies, and, finally, its perfect satisfaction in the key-note. The invention of melody—in other words, the unveiling thereby of the deepest secrets of human will and emotion—is the achievement of genius farthest removed from all reflective and conscious design. I will carry my analogy farther. As the rapid transition of wish to fulfillment and from fulfillment to wish is happiness and contentment, so quick melodies without great deviations from the key-note are joyous, while slow melodies, only reaching the key-note after painful dissonances and frequent changes of time, are sad.

The rapid, lightly grasped phrases of dance-music seem to speak of easily reached, every-day happiness: the *allegro maestoso*, on the contrary, with its slow periods, long movements and wide deviations, bespeaks a noble, magnanimous striving after a far-off goal, the fulfillment of which is eternal. The *adagio* proclaims the suffering of lofty endeavors, holding petty or common joys in contempt. How wonderful is the effect of minor and major! how astounding that the alteration of a semitone and the exchange from a major to a minor third should immediately and invariably awaken a pensive, wistful mood from which the major at once releases us! The *adagio* in a minor key expresses the deepest sadness, losing itself in a pathetic lament.

Such brief citations suffice to show us in what light Schopenhauer regarded music, but all who wish to master his theories on the subject must turn to his works themselves, wherein they will find, as our French neighbors say, *à quoi boire et à quoi manger*: in other words, intellectual sustenance, equally light, palatable, and nourishing, to be returned to again and again with unflagging appetite. The world of art, like the world of thought and philosophy, was more real and vital to him than that of daily life and common circumstances; and how he regarded a musical composition, a picture, a book, or any true work of art, the following happy similes will testify:

The creations of poets, sculptors, and artists generally contain treasures of deepest recognizable wisdom, since in these is proclaimed the innermost nature of things, whose interpreters and illustrators they are. Every one who reads a poem or looks at a work of art must seek for such wisdom, and each naturally grasps it in proportion to his intelligence and culture, as a skipper drops his plummet-line just as far as the length of his rope allows. We should stand before a picture as before a sovereign, waiting to see if it has something to tell us and what it may be, and no more speak to the one than to the other, else we only express ourselves.

This last sentence shows Schopenhauer's intensity of artistic feeling, nor must it be for a moment supposed that he was insensible to nature. In his last lonely years at Frankfort, and indeed throughout his life, long country rambles were his daily recreations, the wholesome rule of "two hours' brisk movement in the open air," which he laid down for his countrypeople, not being neglected by himself. Many of us know Frankfort pretty well, and can picture to ourselves exactly the kind of suburban spot which might have suggested this thought to the great pessimist:

How æsthetic is Nature! Every corner of the world, no matter how insignificant, adorns itself in the tastefullest manner when left alone, proclaiming

by natural grace and harmonious grouping of leaves, flowers, and garlands that Nature, and not the great egotist man, has here had her way. Neglected spots straightway become beautiful.

And then he goes on to compare the English and French garden, with a compliment to the former, which unfortunately it has ceased to deserve. The straggling, old-fashioned English garden Schopenhauer admired so much is now a rarity—the formal parterres, geometrical flower-beds, and close-cropped alleys he equally detested, having superseded the easy, natural graces of former days. He adored animals no less than nature, and amid the intricate problems of his great work and the weighty questions therein evolved concerning the nature and destiny of human will and intellect, he makes occasion to put in a plea for the dumb things so dear to him. His pet dog, Atma, meaning in Sanskrit the Soul of the Universe, was the constant companion of his walks, and when he died his master was inconsolable. The cynic, the misanthrope, the woman-hater, was all tenderness here.

Was Schopenhauer happy or not? Who can answer that question for another? He was alone in the world, having never made for himself a home or domestic ties; he hated society—except, as we have seen, that infinitesimal portion of it suited to his intellectual aspirations, his favorite recreations being long country walks and the drama. It also amused him to dine at a *table d'hôte*, which he did constantly in the latter part of his lifetime. But that he understood what inner happiness was we have seen, and the secret of it he had discovered also. If joy of the intenser kind is born of thought and spiritual or intellectual beauty, no less true it is that every-day enjoyment depends on cheerfulness, and with the following golden maxims, suited alike for the "Normal Mensch" and the "Genialer," commonplace humanity and the choicer intellects among whom Schopenhauer found his kindred, may aptly close this little paper:

What most directly and above everything else makes us happy, is cheerfulness of mind, for this excellent gift is its own reward. He who is naturally joyous has every reason to be so, for the simple reason that he is as he is. Nothing can compensate like cheerfulness for the lack of other possessions, while in itself it makes up for all others. A man may be young, well-favored, rich, honored, happy, but, if we would ascertain whether or no he be happy, we must first put the question, Is he cheerful? If he is cheerful, then it matters not whether he be young or old, straight or crooked, rich or poor; he is happy. Let us throw open wide the doors to Cheerfulness whenever she makes her appearance, for it can never be unpropitious; instead of which, we too often bar her way, asking ourselves, Have we

indeed, or have we not, good reasons for being content? Cheerfulness is the current coin of happiness, and not like other possession, merely its letter of credit.

We will close this paper with a few quotations culled here and there from the four volumes before us. It is alternately the sage, the artist, the satirist who is speaking to us :

Poverty is the scourge of the people, *ennui* of the better ranks. The boredom of Sabbatarianism is to the middle classes what week-day penury is to the needy.

Thinkers, and especially men of true genius, without any exception, find noise insupportable. This is no question of habit. The truly stoical indifference of ordinary minds to noise is extraordinary ; it creates no disturbance in their thoughts, either when occupied in reading or writing, whereas, on the contrary, the intellectually endowed are thereby rendered incapable of doing anything. I have ever been of opinion that the amount of noise a man can support with equanimity is in inverse proportion to his mental powers, and may be taken therefore as a measure of intellect generally. If I hear a dog barking for hours on the threshold of a house, I know well enough what kind of brains I may expect from its inhabitants. He who habitually slams the door instead of closing it is not only an ill-bred, but a coarse-grained, feebly-endowed creature.

It is truly incredible how negative and insignificant, seen from without, and how dull and meaningless, regarded from within, is the life of by far the greater bulk of human beings !

The life of every individual, when regarded in detail, wears a comic, when regarded as a whole, a tragic aspect. For the misadventures of the hour, the toiling and moiling of the day, the fretting of the week, are turned by freak of destiny into comedy. But the never-fulfilled desires, the vain strivings, the hopes so pitilessly shattered, the unspeakable blun-

ders of life as a whole, with its final suffering and death, ever make up a tragedy.

Mere clever men always appear exactly at the right time : they are called forth by the spirit of their age, to fulfill its needs, being capable of nothing else. They influence the progressive culture of their fellows and demands of special enlightenment ; thereby their praise and its reward. Genius flashes like a comet amid the orbits of the age, its erratic course being a mystery to the steadfastly moving planets around.

Genius produces no works of practical value. Music is composed, poetry conceived, pictures painted ; but a work of genius is never a thing to use. Uselessness indeed is its title of honor. All other human achievements contribute toward the support or alleviation of our existence ; works of genius alone exist for their own sake, or may be considered as the very flower and bloom of destiny. This is why the enjoyment of art so uplifts our hearts. In the natural world also we rarely see beauty allied to usefulness. Lofty trees of magnificent aspect bear no fruit, productive trees for the most part being ugly little cripples. So, also, the most beautiful buildings are not useful. A temple is never a dwelling-place. A man of rare mental endowments, compelled by circumstances to follow a humdrum career fitted for the most commonplace, is like a costly vase, covered with exquisite designs, used as a cooking utensil. To compare useful people with geniuses is to compare building stones with diamonds.

Could we prevent all villains from becoming fathers of families, shut up the dunderheads in monasteries, permit a harem to the nobly gifted, and provide every girl of spirit and intellect with a husband worthy of her, we might look for an age surpassing that of Pericles.

Virtue, no more than genius, is to be taught. We might just as well expect our systems of morals and ethics generally to produce virtuous, noble-minded, and saintly individuals, as æsthetics to create poets, sculptors, and musicians.

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